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Creating Shortcuts to your Favorite Items

One of the easiest ways to access programs and files more quickly is to create shortcuts. If you glance at your computer desktop, you might see icons for items such as Microsoft Outlook or Word. Look closely - these items may have a small black arrow in a white box in the lower left corner of the icon. This indicates that the icon is a shortcut. If you were to delete this icon, you won't delete the program or file itself, just this particular link to it.

Shortcuts can be extremely useful. If you use a lot of different

Magnify Your Computer Screen

6 Ways to Make it Easier to See

By Kara Mueller, Primary Help Desk Analyst

Many computer users struggle to see the information on their monitors, especially after upgrading to a new computer or monitor. Fortunately, easy remedies are at hand. Read on to discover ways to make your screen easier to see, including how to make the font bigger, magnify everything on your screen, increase icon size, and fine-tune screen resolution.



1. Enlarge your text

You can easily increase the default size of text and other items, such as icons and mouse pointers. In Windows 7, right-click on your desktop and choose Screen Resolution. Click the link to "Make text and other items larger or smaller." In this window, you can adjust the size of your text and see a preview of how it might look. If you make any changes, you will need to restart your computer for them to take effect.

In Windows XP, right-click on your desktop and choose Properties. On the Appearance tab, the third drop down box will allow you to increase the font size.

If you have a mouse with a scroll wheel, many programs allow you to increase and decrease the size of on-screen text and graphics simply by holding the Ctrl key while using the mouse wheel to scroll up and down. If you want to enlarge what you see in Internet Explorer but your mouse doesn't have a scroll wheel, press Ctrl+Plus Sign (+); Ctrl+Minus Sign (-) shrinks what you see.

2. Customize your display

Changing the appearance of your on-screen environment can dramatically enhance readability. In Windows 7 and in Windows Vista, the Ease of Access Center can guide you through some basic display changes. In addition, certain Microsoft programs, such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel, allow you to

types of programs, it's very helpful to have a shortcut to each one on your desktop or taskbar so they are quickly accessible. Otherwise, you'll have to navigate through the start menu each time you need access to it.

Thankfully, creating a shortcut is easy! Navigate to your program under All Programs in the start menu, but don't open it. Instead, where you would normally left-click to open the program, right-click instead to bring up a menu. Highlight Send To, then click Desktop (Create Shortcut). This will put a shortcut directly on your desktop that you can use to access the program. You can also pin this shortcut to your Windows 7 Taskbar (right-click and choose Pin to Taskbar), or move it to your Windows XP or Vista Quick Launch bar (click and drag the shortcut to the bar).

Programs aren't the only items you can create shortcuts for. Many of us work with files constantly that are on a network drive or buried within many folders. If you frequently need to access a particular folder, you can create a shortcut to it by following the same steps above (right-click on the folder, highlight Send To, then Desktop - Create Shortcut). By doing this, you'll have a quick and easy way to open that folder. You can also do this for virtually any file you wish. If you have a particular file you work with frequently that may be located on a network drive, create a shortcut to it to access it quickly and easily from your desktop instead. Now it's much easier to find whenever you need it.

Shortcuts are a simple way to eliminate a few extra steps from your daily routine, make important programs and files easier to find, and save a little bit of extra time and hassle!

choose text and background color, and Internet Explorer allows you to choose the colors and fonts in which webpages are displayed. In addition, the core Microsoft Office programs allow you to change or customize their default color scheme. High contrast schemes are typically easiest to read.

Windows 7 has different themes to choose from. You can experiment and find out which one is best for you by right-clicking on your desktop and choosing Personalize. You will be presented with a number of different themes to pick from. You can also change the Windows 7 glass color. This will affect the taskbar and the title bar at the top of your windows.

Switching fonts and font color may also improve readability. In Word 2010, Excel 2010, and PowerPoint 2010, you can change the font, font size, and font color from the Ribbon on the Home tab. In Word, Ctrl+D also calls up font options. Experiment to find out which combinations work best for you.

3. Increase icon size

You can quickly make just the icons on your Windows 7 or Windows Vista desktop larger and easier to see. Right-click the desktop, point to View, and then click Large Icons, Medium Icons, or Classic Icons (classic icons are the smallest). You can also use the scroll wheel on your mouse to change the size of your desktop icons. On the desktop, press Ctrl while you scroll up or down.

Note: When you adjust the default icon size, you can also use the Font and Size functions to adjust the default font and font size for icon text.

4. Use the Magnifier

You may have been using Windows for years and not realized it features a built-in Magnifier that works much like a magnifying glass does. You can even adjust the Magnifier zoom level and focus wherever you want to.

In Windows 7, click Start and type "magnify" for the magnifier to appear, or navigate to All Programs > Accessories > Ease of Access > Magnifier.

In Windows XP, you can click Start, then Run, and type magnify for it to appear, or browse to All Programs > Accessories > Accessibility > Magnifier.

The Magnifier in Windows 7 includes full-screen and lens modes. Full-screen mode lets you magnify your entire screen and follow your mouse pointer. In lens mode, only the area around the mouse pointer is magnified. When you move the mouse pointer, the magnified area moves with it. To customize Magnifier settings or to exit Magnifier, click the magnifying-glass icon to see available options.

5. Enlarge your mouse pointer

You can change the look of your mouse pointer so it is easier for you to find quickly. Try selecting a new pointer style, and try changing the color and size of your mouse pointer.

In the Windows Control Panel (Start button, then Control Panel) choose the option for Mouse (in Windows 7, you'll find this option under Hardware and Sound). On the pointers tab, you'll find many options in the drop down menu under Scheme. For a high visibility mouse pointer, choose an option that has the words large or extra large beside the name. Windows 7 also has a scheme named Magnified, which also features large, easy to see cursors.

6. Improve your screen resolution

Screen resolution impacts the clarity of the text and images on your screen. At higher resolutions, items appear sharper but they are smaller, so more items fit on the screen. At lower resolutions, fewer items fit on the screen but they are larger and easier to see. Whichever version of Windows you use, changing the screen resolution can make a big difference.

Change your screen resolution by right-clicking on the desktop and choosing Screen Resolution (Windows 7 and Vista) or Properties, then go to the Settings tab (Windows XP). You can move the slider to choose a different screen resolution but note that not all screen resolutions will look correct on your particular system. Decreasing the screen resolution (ex. Using 1024x768 instead of 1280x1024) will make items larger.

It's important to find the settings that work best for you. Some people prefer small, sharp icons and text whereas many others have trouble seeing what's on the screen if it isn't large enough. Hopefully, these tips will help you fine tune your settings to the perfect ones for your eyes! Contact the Seltek helpdesk at 360-4490 for help with adjusting your settings.

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